



PEOPLE FOR  
THE ETHICAL  
TREATMENT  
OF ANIMALS

April 28, 2020

Noelle E. Cockett, Ph.D.  
Office of the President  
Utah State University  
1400 Old Main Hill  
Logan UT 84322-1400

Via e-mail: [Noelle.Cockett@usu.edu](mailto:Noelle.Cockett@usu.edu)

Dear President Cockett,

Thank you in advance for your time. I'm writing on behalf of People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) and our more than 6.5 million members and supporters worldwide regarding an urgent matter. Given the COVID-19 pandemic that is influencing the shut-down of animal experiments around the world,<sup>1,2</sup> we urge Utah State University (USU) to immediately: 1) prohibit approval of new animal protocols and experiments; 2) prohibit breeding and acquisition of new animals for laboratories; 3) finalize and end ongoing animal experiments; and, 4) prove that all of these animals and experiments are concretely advancing human health, and if they're not then switch to superior human-relevant, animal-free research methods.<sup>3</sup>

### **COVID-19: Ending Animal Experiments Protects Animals, Staff, and Patients**

As part of its COVID-19 contingency plan, USU's Laboratory Animal Research Center (LARC) issued an "Epidemic Response Plan" that includes actions from the "cessation of non-critical animal breeding" to the "[t]argeted euthanasia of non-critical rats and mice," and the "[e]uthanasia of all animals."<sup>4</sup> This will likely lead to the destruction of many animals and begs the question why taxpayer dollars are being used on experiments that can easily be ended or delayed or that involve animals who, apparently, are considered to be extraneous to the testing in the first place. Equally troubling is that the experiments themselves are not critical to advancing human health, since more than 90 percent

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.statnews.com/2020/03/14/coronavirus-pandemic-forces-research-labs-shut-down/>

<sup>2</sup> [https://www.chronicle.com/article/Colleges-Euthanized-Lab/248483?cid=wcontentlist\\_hp\\_latest](https://www.chronicle.com/article/Colleges-Euthanized-Lab/248483?cid=wcontentlist_hp_latest)

<sup>3</sup> [https://www.peta.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/The-Research-Modernization-Deal-Report-US\\_FINAL\\_2020\\_300.pdf](https://www.peta.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/The-Research-Modernization-Deal-Report-US_FINAL_2020_300.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> [https://research.usu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/USU-LARC-Epidemic-Response-Plan\\_Color-Coded-3-23-20.pdf](https://research.usu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/USU-LARC-Epidemic-Response-Plan_Color-Coded-3-23-20.pdf)

Washington, D.C.  
1536 16th St. N.W.  
Washington, DC 20036  
202-483-PETA

Los Angeles  
2154 W. Sunset Blvd.  
Los Angeles, CA 90026  
323-644-PETA

Norfolk  
501 Front St.  
Norfolk, VA 23510  
757-622-PETA

Berkeley  
2855 Telegraph Ave.  
Ste. 301  
Berkeley, CA 94705  
510-763-PETA

Info@peta.org  
PETA.org

Affiliates:

- PETA Asia
- PETA India
- PETA France
- PETA Australia
- PETA Germany
- PETA Netherlands
- PETA Foundation (U.K.)

of highly promising basic science discoveries (most of which involve animal experiments) do not enter routine clinical use in humans.<sup>5</sup>

We call on USU to publicly release the following information:

- 1) An itemization of all experimental protocols that will continue as part of USU's COVID-19 response plan (such that they may be categorized as critical, essential, necessary, and/or other similar terminology);
- 2) An itemization of all experimental protocols that will not continue as part of USU's COVID-19 response plan (such that they may be categorized as extraneous, non-critical, non-essential, ramped down, disposable, unnecessary and/or other similar terminology);
- 3) The number and species of animals who are in experimental protocols covered by item number 1 above (e.g., in a critical and/or similar terminology category), and the number and species of animals who are in experimental protocols covered by item number 2 above (e.g., not in a critical and/or similar terminology category); and,
- 4) The endpoint/disposition of animals used in experimental protocols covered by item number 2 above (e.g., not in a critical and/or similar terminology category), and notice of if, when, and how many of these animals have been and/or will be euthanized, culled, killed, destroyed, disposed or reduced in cage census.

You can contact me by e-mail at [ShalinG@peta.org](mailto:ShalinG@peta.org) or by telephone at 757-962-8325. We look forward to your swift reply to this quickly developing and urgent matter. Thank you.

Sincerely yours,



Shalin G. Gala  
Vice President, International Laboratory Methods  
Laboratory Investigations Department

---

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.bmj.com/content/348/bmj.g3387.long>